

Daniel Buck to be first doctor at Hermiston School District's Clinic

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER



Contributed photo from Good Shepherd Health Care System

Starting Monday, Daniel Buck will be serving at Hermiston School District's Wellness Clinic.

Dr. Daniel Buck has a history in Hermiston and it's going to continue for a while longer.

The Hermiston School District has partnered with Good Shepherd Health Care System to provide the HSD Wellness Clinic for the upcoming school year. Buck is the first doctor to serve the clinic, which opened its doors Monday.

"It's a small town community," he said. "And what I mean by that is that people know who you are. It's good to be recognized by other people. In big cities, you don't get that."

Buck moved to the western Umatilla County community from Las Vegas at the age of 5, attending Highland Hills Elementary School and later Armand Larive Middle School.

Buck looks back fondly at his lifeguarding experience during the summers in high school. He still remembers when Kyle Kennison was the track coach, and the track was made of cinder.

"I was there when we raised the funds and first put in a rubberized track," he recalled.

Today, that same track is named Kennison Field for

the late coach.

"I had lots of fun growing up around here," he said.

Buck graduated from Hermiston High School in 1992 and earned his associate's degree at Blue Mountain Community College.

He later got his bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in chemistry at the University of Utah, where he also attended medical school. Utah was the place of choice, he said, because it was close to his wife's family.

It wasn't until 2016, after

he completed his medical residency in Edgewood, Kentucky, that Buck came back to his hometown of Hermiston to work as an emergency room doctor for Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Today, he works at the hospital's urgent care clinic, seeing patients of all ages and varieties.

When he's not busy at the Good Shepherd Urgent Care, Buck enjoys fishing at Hat Rock and Warehouse Beach on his boat.

He's wanted to be a doc-

tor since childhood, and his passion has yet to waver.

"There's so much we still don't understand about how the human body works. I like being able to help people, even with simple things that improve their lives," Buck said.

He said it's important to provide early intervention for injuries, and that a school-based clinic like the district's will help with that.

"From what I've seen, it's great to provide medical help to sports injuries that happen

at the school. Things in P.E. classes, things that happen with sports. Concussions are a very common thing now on people's minds," Buck said.

Another clinic was previously run by Family Health Associates, which opened in the winter of 2016. It was then that HSD saw other districts' success with providing on-site health care, according to HSD communications officer Maria Duron.

Good Shepherd partnered with the district earlier this year. Duron said the district's goal is to improve student attendance. Staff members, students and immediate family can have walk-in appointments during class, lunch, or prep time.

In the past, the Wellness Clinic had seen 10 patients or so a day, according to Duron.

The clinic will be offering free sports physicals Thursday and Friday, which are required every two years for student athletes. After Aug. 2, sports physicals will be available for \$45 at the clinic or at Good Shepherd.

The Wellness Clinic will also offer vaccinations, physical exams, treatment and illness evaluation, and even small stitches and sutures. Students under 18 must have a signed parent consent form and a medical history from

a parent or legal guardian. If the student has insurance, it will be billed. The clinic's rates are the same as those at Good Shepherd.

Urgent Care practice manager Natasha Ellwanger said that the clinic will rotate doctors as the year progresses, and that there will always be a three-person staff at the clinic, consisting of one nurse or medical assistant, one receptionist, and one care provider, all from Good Shepherd Urgent Care.

Ellwanger said she has noticed in the past that Urgent Care can get quite busy during after-school hours, and hopes the clinic will help alleviate flow at Good Shepherd.

"I see it as being a benefit for the district. And, hopefully, as it picks up and if it does become a busy thing we can open more days," she said.

Open hours

The Wellness clinic will be open on Mondays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students and parents can reach the Wellness Clinic at 541-667-6199.

Review committee maintains Umatilla County needs a manager

By PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Michele Grable, chair of the Umatilla County Charter Review Committee, addresses the county board of commissioners Wednesday morning in Pendleton concerning the committee's recommendation to hire a county manager.

The Umatilla County Charter Review Committee continued to advocate for a manager to oversee county government. Review committee chair Michele Grable said that move is about recognizing the needs of the future.

Grable addressed the committee's final report with the county board of commissioners during its public meeting last Wednesday at the county courthouse in Pendleton. She said the committee eliminated its recommendation to change the board from three full-time commissioners to five part-timers "strictly based upon the input" from commissioners Bill Elfering and John Shafer during a May 29 work session.

"We decided that upon your recommendation that moving to a five-member board of commissioners would not be advisable," she said. "That it would be a very hard sell to the public. Change is difficult. And it would not be in the best interest of the county to pursue an election that was not likely to succeed."

She also said she could see how the board could consider the change threatening because it took away power and reduced salaries. Still, she said, the committee considers the county at

some point would be better off with five part-time commissioners plus a full-time county manager.

"We did stick with — and have recommended very strongly — that a county manager be appointed," she said.

Citing Commissioner George Murdock, chair of the county board, Grable said 27 of Oregon's 36 counties have a manager. County tax assessor Paul Chalmers told the committee that previous commissioners and boards sunk employee morale and created a negative workplace. Chalmers also described Murdock as the de facto county manager, she said, which other county department heads echoed.

A county manager would

come with a cost, Grable said, but Robert Pahl, the county's chief finance officer, confirmed the money for such a position would be available in the budget.

The county adopted the charter in 1994, when the county population was about 59,000 and the county budget was \$18 million. Now, the county has more than 80,000 residents and the total budget is north of \$90 million. She added a manager also would allow the commissioners to be more responsive to the public and spend more time advocating in Salem and Washington, D.C., for the county.

Committee member Dan Dorran, building on that point, told the board the city of Bend received \$60.7 million in federal highway

funds for an interchange. Achieving that grant took one city councilor and a county commissioner working in D.C. for 21 days. That advocacy work is critical, he said.

The second proposal from the committee would simplify elections. If no more than two candidates seek the office, there would be no May primary election and the candidates would advance to the November general. If more than two run, the two who win the most votes in the primary face off in the general. Murdock said he was not excited about five part-time commissioners and appreciated the committee's change in direction. He also added the county in the past had a quasi-administrator.

"In many eyes that did not go well," he said, "but I don't know if that would be a basis for not having administration in the future."

He concluded he remains committed to the integrity of the review committee's proposals and should consider at the Aug. 7 meeting whether or not to put them on the ballot.

"This has gone on for 18 months," he said. "I see no value in fussing around any longer."

Commissioner Shafer made the motion to that end, Elfering gave the second and the trio voted in favor of the plan.

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